

ARTICLES FROM THE PERSUADER VOLUME I

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ARTICLES FROM **THE PERSUADER**

VOLUME 1

The articles in this book appeared in our bi-monthly paper, **THE PERSUADER**, from 1987 to 1993. They were written by Edgar Lee Paschall, Pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, unless otherwise designated. These articles are designed to persuade one to take a fresh look at TRUTH and to RIGHTLY DIVIDE God's Word. If we can be of help in any way, please feel free to call or write. If you need more copies of this book or any of our other books please write to the above address. These books are free as long as funds are available to keep printing them. Use the material in this book any way that brings honor and glory to our Lord.

Because of Calvary,
Edgar Lee Paschall

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STAY OUT OF THE DITCH

"Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess." Deuteronomy 5: 32-33

Our text verse Deut. 5: 32 says, "ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left," signifying one needs to stay in the middle of the road or Stay Out of The Ditch. There is a sense that a politician is a compromiser when he is called a "middle of the roader", and in some instances, so is a preacher. But today I would like to think along the subject "Stay Out of The Ditch" so that you might realize there are ditches on each side of the road spiritually.

I remember several years ago when the road was so muddy and rutted that you couldn't drive without slipping and sliding and if you weren't careful you would get in the ditch. When you realized you were in the ditch you would shift to second gear and put the "petal to the metal". Sometimes you would come out of the ditch, but before you could get the truck under control, you were in the ditch on the opposite side of the road. This illustration causes one to stop and apply this to many in our Baptist churches today.

Let us call the ditch on the right side of the road liberalism. Liberalism is a state of being liberal or broad minded. When one has this attitude, he doesn't want to offend anyone with his preaching. This attitude suggest a living pattern "if it feels good do it". Liberalism is motivated by lust. Lust means unbridled desire; unlawful or longing for what is forbidden. Really lust is a diseased condition of the soul. This ditch is the "gray" area many speak about today. An example is when someone says, "I don't look at things the way you do," or "I don't think this is wrong," and it matters not what the Bible says about it. The gnostic says the spirit of man is good and can't sin, while the flesh is evil and can't help but sin; therefore, they let go and operate on lust. This is the overall picture of those in the ditch of liberalism.

The ditch on the left side of the road I call legalism. Legalism is a strict adherence to rules and regulations. Legalism is motivated by law. The Pharisees followed the law, but they missed what the law revealed. The law brought only condemnation and death. It was called a pedagogue, schoolmaster, childleader, and was given to bring one to Christ, who fulfilled the law. Law brings guilt and condemnation upon a person because he can't live up to the rules and regulations set forth by it. Law brings death; therefore, it kills peace, joy, and hope in an individual who is in this ditch of legalism. It also brings death to the church which is in this ditch.

The middle of the road is what I call liberty, which is motivated by love not lust or rules and regulations. Love fulfills what the law requires. In Mark 12: 29-31 Jesus said, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

Love is the greatest motive in the world. You see, what is taught in the ditch of

legalism is basically right but the motivation is wrong. The saint is set free of rules and regulations, but he still adheres to God's word because he has his priorities straight. The number one priority in our life should be to love the Lord Jesus Christ with all our heart, soul, and mind. When we love Him with that type of love, then we want to do what He wants us to do. As a son, I did some things for my dad because I loved him. As a husband, I do some things for my wife because I love her.

I would like to give a few examples to make my point. First, let us think about sins in general. The liberal preacher in the right ditch won't preach against sin; therefore the individual under his preaching becomes a dirty vessel and God can't use a dirty vessel. As a result of dirty vessels the church becomes powerless. The legalist sometimes makes sins appear as a means within themselves instead of a means to an end. The preacher in liberty preaches against sins as a means to an end. He does this because the sins of the flesh keeps one from believing and the sin of unbelief is what sends you to hell.

Second, let us think about dress. The liberal says I will dress or undress like I want to. The legalist won't wear immodest apparel because the preacher says not to, but inside he may have a strong desire to dress by worldly standards instead of how the Bible says to dress. Then when the guilt and condemnation get so strong because he can't live up to the standards set for him, he usually leaves the legalist ditch and go across the road to the liberal ditch and dresses like the world. This is the fulfillment of II Peter 2: 20-22, where it speaks of a dog returning to his vomit. He just did what his old unchanged nature wanted to do all along. But the man in liberty, motivated by love, does not want to wear immodest apparel because the Spirit of God lives inside him. He loves the Lord and doesn't want to bring reproach on Jesus or hurt Him.

These are two of many examples, but the main point I would like to deal with is **Salvation**. The liberal in the right ditch says it really doesn't matter what you believe or do to be saved just as long as you are sincere. Some say sign a card and shake the preacher by the hand. Others say be baptized and you'll be alright. Still others say just "be good". The liberal says one church is as good as another and we're all striving for the same place. Just be sincere!

I heard about a man who got up in the night with a headache and went to the medicine cabinet without turning on the lights and took what he thought were two aspirins, and the next morning they found him dead. His wife had rearranged the medicine cabinet and instead of aspirins, the man had taken cyanide pills. Oh, he was sincere, but dead!

The legalist in the left ditch has it all figured out when it comes to salvation. I call this "lock box soulwinning" or "easy believism". He has it in a tight package called the "Roman road plan" or "Four Spiritual Laws" and uses the same procedures on each and every person whether the Holy Ghost is dealing or not. Most of the time even trying to do the job of the Holy Spirit in conviction. They feel compelled to win so many each day so they can put spiritual notches in their gospel belt. Usually what they wind up with are their own "converts" thereby making them "twofold more the child of hell than themselves," (Mat. 23: 15) because of their false profession. These legalist are sincere and just doing what they know to do, because their own profession was made in this manner.

The legalist usually says, "repeat this prayer after me," and when the sinner has prayed, the soulwinner will ask, "Are you saved?" The sinner may say, "I don't know", and the legalist soulwinner will give them assurance by saying you called and Romans 10: 13 says, "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." If you practice this, you are in a ditch. You do not know whether the individual called from his heart or not.

What we need to do is get out of the ditches of liberalism and legalism concerning

salvation and get in the middle of the road, realizing that **Salvation is of the Lord**. When I make that statement, I'm referring to the work of the Holy Spirit. I Cor. 12:3 says, ". . . And that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Therefore it is the Holy Spirit who works salvation in an individual.

First, the Holy Spirit illuminates (gives light) or lets a man see that there is one God. He does this through the conscience (Rom. 1:19) and through creation (Rom. 1:20; Psa. 19:1-3). Then He brings man to a point where he realizes that he is a sinner by nature (Psa. 58:3) and by choice (Rom. 3:23). It is not enough to recognize that you are a sinner but you need to see yourself a lost sinner. The Holy Spirit then uses the Word of God to convict and draw the sinner. (John 16:8-11; 6:44, 65). Godly sorrow is thereby worked in the heart, which in turn works repentance. (II Cor. 7:10)

Faith coming through the word (Rom. 10:17) is then imparted as a gift (Eph. 2:8-9; John 3:27) to the sinner so that he can respond to the Holy Spirit's invitation to come to God through Jesus. (Isa. 1:18; 55:1; Rev. 22:17; John 6:37) When one responds, he is then sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:14) and the sinner then instantly becomes free from sin and death. This gives him liberty in the middle of the road. Also, it gives God all the glory to whom glory is due, because salvation is of the Lord.

We need to realize that the devil doesn't want us to have liberty in the middle of the road. It is like being in a car that gets in one ditch and you put it in second gear and out you come, maybe going in or almost in the other ditch. When you finally get the car under control in the center of the road you stop and shake with fear and trembling until you get over the incident. Then, and not before, will you proceed on down the road at a slower, safer speed.

We have warnings given in Gal. 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." When you get out of the ditch of legalism and you are in the middle of the road, the warning is: don't get back in the left ditch of legalism motivated by rules and regulations but stand still (wait; Isa. 40:31) in liberty motivated by love.

Also a warning is given in Gal. 5:13, "For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty: only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." This is a warning to stay out of the right ditch of liberalism motivated by lust and stand in liberty in the middle of the road.

One needs to stand fast with fear and trembling until he has direction of the Spirit to move out and then it should be with caution. Gal. 5:16 says, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Then one day God will let you run and not by weary. (Isa. 40:31)

The sad part about the man who is in the middle of the road in liberty which is motivated by love for Lord Jesus, is the liberal in the right ditch looks at him and calls him a legalist, while the legalist in the left ditch looks at him and calls him a liberal. But when an individual gets free in the middle of the road he learns he is not fighting for victory but from victory. He also knows he has only one person to please. That one is the Lord Jesus Christ. So he proceeds down the middle of the road similar to what an elephant would do as ants spit at him from either side of the road. This doesn't mean that the individual will not stop and minister in the Spirit to those in the ditch and try to help them out. But it does mean that he will not get in the ditch and participate in the ditch activity just to identify with him.

Brethren, the devil has us sidetracked. He has us fighting brush fires while the forest is burning. In other words if we are not careful, he has us fighting issues that occupy our

time while the souls of men are dying and going to hell. The only way we are going to reach men is to do it God's way and His way is the middle of the road, in liberty, motivated by love.

Brethren, stay out of the ditch of liberalism and legalism. If you are in a ditch, the only way you can get out is to let the Holy Spirit wench you out by a cable of grace, mercy, and love. Yield to that cable today and be at liberty in Christ.

THE PERSUADER - Feb.- March, 1987

TWO WAYS AND TWO GATES

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7: 13-14

The Bible speaks of two ways and two gates by which every person will enter sooner or later. Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate." This carries a meaning of a point, place, time, and deals with a purpose. To enter the strait gate means to be saved. When one is saved, there is a point, place, time, and purpose involved. Therefore, one can't be saved and not know when, where, how, and what happened. You may not know what to call all that happened, but when truth is preached about real salvation, you can identify the ingredients in your experience and it will be more sure as each day passes.

The strait gate means a narrow, constricted entrance which leads to life. The gate is so narrow there is only room for you and the Holy Ghost. Therefore, salvation is of the Lord and no individual can go through that gate with you; neither can you carry all your sins with you.

In contrast, there is a wide gate which means, "spread out flat." It leads to destruction, which is the lake of fire. This gate is of such a nature that you can carry anybody, anything, and everything you want when you enter the wide gate, and no one will stop you.

There are two ways that lead to these two gates. There is a broad way that leads to the wide gate and the Bible says, "many there be which go in thereat." There is a narrow way that leads to the strait gate and the Bible says, "few there be that find it." This means there are few that even find the narrow way that leads to the strait gate.

One of our greatest problems in our churches today is that too many people are looking for the strait gate while still on the broad way. The strait gate is only on the narrow way. Oh, I know what many preach today. "Just keep your sins; just be sincere; just have a desire and Jesus will save you." Why did Jesus turn away the rich young ruler in Matthew 19? It was because he wasn't willing to forsake all. That's why Jesus warned in Luke 13: 24, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Strive means to contend with an adversary. You will have to contend with the flesh, world, and the devil before you enter the strait gate. This is not talking about works for salvation, but simply striving to overcome the obstacles that will get in your way while trying to get to Jesus. Many seek or desire to enter the strait gate, Jesus said, but they will not enter (be saved) because they did not strive.

We are living in a day when we hear a lot about re-dedication and backsliding in our

churches. Most of our re-dedications are simply those who move from the broad way to the narrow way, but have not yet gone through the strait gate. Also, most of those we call backsliders are those who move from the narrow way to the broad way, but they have never been saved. They have never been through the strait gate. You will not find the strait gate on the broad way.

You say, "Preacher, you're just making salvation too hard." Read Mat. 19:23-26 and you'll find that Jesus made salvation impossible with man, because salvation is of the Lord and Jesus said in Mat. 19:26, "With God all things are possible."

As I said before, the strait gate is a narrow, constricted gate where there is only room for you and the Holy Ghost as you go through. Mom and Dad can't go through with you, and neither can the preacher; but we can walk the narrow way with you. We can love you, encourage you, pray for you, and just be a friend to you as you strive along the narrow way, headed for the strait gate. I just want you to know if you are going through turmoil, upheaval, doubt, confusion or whatever, I'll be your friend. I'll love you, stick by you, and stand with you, however long it may take, because I understand. I have been there and you're my friend. You are my ministry. Feel free to call or write. We'll send you copies of our **ROAD OF LIGHT** tapes that God can use to help you. You see, the narrow way is a road of Light and few there be that find it.

Remember this: Phil. 1:6 says, "Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." He starts a good work in you long before you are ever saved. Find the narrow way. Stay in it, and you can by the grace of God. You do so, and you'll enter the strait gate at a point, place, and time with the purpose of being justified. But if you travel the broad way, you'll never find the strait gate and at the end of the journey there will be a wide gate waiting and it leads to destruction, to the lake of fire forever.

Two ways and two gates. The question is, "Which way are you traveling?" By the way, there is a narrow way after you enter the strait gate also. May we ever travel the narrow way.

THE PERSUADER - Dec. 1988-Jan. 1989

THE SINNERS' PRAYER ???

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." Luke 18:13

The Lord spoke the parable in Luke 18:9-14, unto a group that considered themselves to be righteous. He compared the actions of the self-righteous Pharisee to that of the publican who represents a sinner. In verse 13 the publican or sinner prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and as a result was justified or saved from his sins.

This prayer in many circles has come to be known as the "sinners' prayer" and has become a means whereby one is saved when they pray this prayer. Many make statements such as, "We had 42 pray the sinners' prayer last Sunday;" and refer to those as being saved because they prayed the "sinners' prayer". They refer to the "sinners' prayer" as meeting the requirements of Romans 10:13, "calling on the name of the Lord." Prayer does not save, Jesus saves! Oh, you may have been praying when you got saved, but it was not the prayer that saved you, it was a work of the Lord because salvation

is of the Lord.

This publican was a Jew, one who grew up in a Jewish home that was familiar with the custom of offering sacrifices, thus having a knowledge of the reason these sacrifices were offered. Therefore, he used the word merciful, which in the Greek is a kindred word to the word in Romans 3:25 translated "propitiation". This verse says that "God set forth Jesus to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood." "Set forth" means to be looked at, or to be exposed to public view. "Propitiation" is translated "mercy seat" in Heb. 9:5 and means that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament mercy seat. What does that involve? Sacrifice, substitute, and sprinkling of the blood.

In the Old Testament, once a year there was a day of atonement. On this day there would be two kids of the goats presented at the door of the tabernacle to the high priest. Lots would be cast to see which one would be offered for a sin offering or sacrifice and the other would be a substitute, called a scapegoat. The high priest would then slay the sacrifice, following proper procedure, and carry the blood to the Holy of Holies and sprinkle the blood upon the mercy seat seven times. Then he would take the scapegoat and lay both his hands upon its head, and confess over him all the iniquities (sins) of the children of Israel. Once this was done, the scapegoat was taken out of the camp into the wilderness where it would be devoured by wild animals so as never to return into the camp again.

Once all of this was completed and accepted by God, then the sins of the people were covered for one more year. This practice was continued year after year until Jesus came on the scene and John the Baptist announced in John 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." He was to be the fulfillment of these Old Testament practices and He was, when God set Him forth to be a propitiation. This speaks of Jesus as our Sacrifice, Substitute (scapegoat), and Mercy Seat.

The sacrifice was an innocent lamb that died for the guilty. Jesus was innocent. He had no sin. He was sacrificed for me, the guilty. I Peter 3:18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust."

Also Jesus was my substitute (scapegoat) when He took my place on the cross. He did it willingly, for He said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Then God allowed my sin and your sin to be placed upon the sinless Son of God, thus fulfilling the scapegoat typeology. At that point He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That was my sin crying out. There on the cross God "set forth", exposed to public view, the terrible suffering of the cross as Jesus became my sacrifice, my substitute.

While hanging on the cross, Jesus, by a miracle of God I don't understand and can't explain, paid an eternity of suffering in hell for me. When He cried, "I thirst", that was the same thirst that the rich man suffered in hell. When He cried, "It is finished", my sins had been paid for. Finally, He died and they took His body and buried it in a borrowed tomb. There He was hidden from view of man, thus fulfilling the type, the scapegoat taken into the wilderness never to be seen again.

After three days and three nights Jesus was resurrected and ascended to the Father. There in the Holy of Holies in Heaven, Jesus sprinkled His own blood upon a mercy seat not made by hands and sat down on the right hand of the Father, signifying the Father had accepted the perfect sacrifice for sin. Isaiah 53:11 speaks of the Father being satisfied, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." What would have been a judgment seat now is a mercy seat.

The songwriter who wrote the song "One Day" summarizes this very well: "Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me; buried, He carried my sins far away; rising, He justified

freely forever..." This chorus reveals Jesus as our sacrifice, substitute, and sprinkling His blood on the mercy seat.

It is not enough that this has been done, it must be appropriated by each individual, and this is done by faith in His blood. (Rom. 3:25) This faith is more than an intellectual belief, for the devils had that. (James 2:19) It must be trusting with the heart and to do so there must be a work of the Holy Ghost in that individual. The Holy Ghost must work Godly sorrow, conviction, lostness, repentance, and faith in one before he can ever call on the name of the Lord. I Cor. 12:3 says, "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

Therefore, when the publican cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner," he understood that Jesus was his sacrifice, substitute, and mercy seat. He had this understanding because he grew up in a home that taught him some things about the truth, and then one day the Holy Ghost pierced his heart and he cried out from the heart exercising faith in His blood and he was saved.

Now to call that the "sinners' prayer" is to put God in a box, and stereotype all salvation experiences in one package. God is a God of originality. Every man's salvation experience is different because it is personal, yet each one's salvation contains the same ingredients.

You may have prayed this prayer and got saved, but it was not because you prayed. It was because the Holy Ghost had done a work in you. The problem today is that many are using a plan and asking men to pray the "sinners' prayer", then they mark a notch on their "gospel gun" claiming to have won "so many" to the Lord, when in essence, all they have done is made them "twofold more the child of hell." (Mat. 23:15) You ask, "Why?" Because most who pray this prayer have no concept of what "merciful" means. They do not understand that Jesus is their sacrifice, substitute, and mercy seat, and they won't until they allow the Holy Ghost to do a work in their hearts.

May we ever be conscious that we're dealing with the souls of men. We're not God. Just because someone prays, "God be merciful to me a sinner," does not mean they are saved. Therefore, we don't have any right to tell them they are saved. Just because they called with the mouth does not mean they are calling with their heart.

As for me, I just want to let the Holy Ghost do the work and then God will get all the glory, which is the way it should be. By His grace I'll just plant and water. I Cor. 3:7 states, "So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

My prayer is, "Father, help me to be faithful to plant and water and then watch You give the increase. Amen."

THE PERSUADER - Feb.-March, 1989

BY YOUR FRUIT YE ARE KNOWN

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:20

In context, Mat. 7:20, states that we can know an individual, whether he is a false prophet (a wolf in sheep's clothing) or a man of God. How can we know that? By their fruit. This leads us to a question: What is fruit?

One needs to know what fruit is before he can recognize it. For example, if you didn't know what peaches and apples were, someone could tell you apples were peaches and peaches were apples and you would not know the difference. Then you would walk up to an apple tree and call its fruit, peaches, but you would be wrong because you had been misinformed.

Many have been misinformed as to what the fruit of a Christian really is. Some think fruit is a boy wearing his hair short, or a woman wearing a dress, or not having a TV in your home. In other words they are looking at the outside and saying that person is a Christian because he walks right, talks right, and dresses right, when in reality they may be a Pharisee. The Pharisee was clean on the outside but Jesus had some words for them in Matthew 23:25-26, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also." You see, it is right and good to be clean on the outside but that is not the fruit by which a Christian is known.

Some say the fruit of a Christian is more Christians, which in one sense is true, but that is the end product of the fruit by which they are known. Just because somebody shed a few tears and followed you in some prayer does not make them a Christian. There are many, who say they have to be a Christian because they "won" so many to the Lord. That's not the assurance of salvation and that's not the fruit that the Lord is referring to.

You say what is the fruit by which you are known? The fruit of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Notice that is "fruit", not plural "fruits", but singular "fruit". The fruit of the Spirit is present in one who has been saved because at the point of believing the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in that individual and along with Him comes the fruit of the Spirit.

Notice the fruit is nine-fold and they are all present in one who is saved. At first it may not be as evident as one would like, but as you grow in the Lord they also grow. Let's look at this nine-fold fruit:

1. **"Love"** is the first one listed, because without love none of the rest could be produced. Romans 5:5 says, "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." "Shed abroad" means to pour in. This means that love, "agape", God's kind of love floods our hearts. Because of this, love or charity leads to the rest of the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit as stated in I Cor. 13:4-8a, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth."

2. **"Joy"** speaks of gladness of heart, something deep settled on the inside yet manifests itself on the outside by rejoicing in Christ who is worthy. I Peter 1:8 says, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

3. **"Peace"** is tranquility of the mind based on the consciousness of a right relationship with God. Peace is a person (Eph. 2:14), not the absences of trouble.

4. **"Longsuffering"** is steadfastness of the soul and patient endurance of wrong under ill-treatment of people, without anger or thought of revenge.

5. **"Gentleness"** refers to kindness, and is a quality that should penetrate the whole nature, mellowing in it all that is harsh and hard.

6. **"Goodness"** refers to that quality in one, who is ruled by and aims at what is right and good. It emphasizes a zeal for goodness and truth in rebuking, correcting, and chastising. Christ's righteous indignation in the temple demonstrated His goodness. Goodness is a kindred word to gentleness but the difference lies in the fact that goodness does not spare sharpness and rebuke to cause good, while gentleness demonstrates only its softness and good nature.

7. **"Faith"** refers to faithfulness and fidelity (faithful devotion to duty) as produced in the life of the yielded Christian by the Holy Spirit. This refers to living by faith which comes by hearing the Word of God. (Rom. 10: 17)

8. **"Meekness"** refers to the qualities of mildness, and gentleness in dealing with others. It denotes the attitude of mind and behavior which arises from humility and causes one to receive with gentleness and kindness whatever may come to him from God or from others for the cause of Christ. Meekness is passive because it is not inclined to anger or resentment.

9. **"Temperance"** is self control by aid of the Holy Spirit.

This nine-fold fruit of the Spirit, is the fruit by which a Christian can be known. You can have all the do's and don'ts (law) you want but if you don't possess love you don't have anything. Jesus said in Mat. 22: 40, that on love hang all the law and prophets. Love for the Lord foremost, then love for our neighbors, then the rest of the fruit of the Spirit will begin to bud in your life. Inside there will be love, joy, and peace but that will be manifested toward others, not just those who love you but even towards your enemies. You'll begin to be kind, gentle, and will suffer long with those who mistreat you. In so doing, you will demonstrate God's longsuffering, forbearance, and goodness toward them, which will lead them to repentance (Rom. 2: 4).

By your fruit you are known. How are you known? As a Christian or a heathen? As a man of God or a false prophet? Your fruit will tell off on you.

"Now abideth faith, hope, and charity (love), these three; but the greatest of these is charity (love)." (I Cor. 13: 13) If love is not present, it is evident there is no fruit, which means you're not saved. I John 3: 14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." But if love is present, then there will also be joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. This is fruit and by this fruit you are known!!

THE PERSUADER - April-May, 1989

TRIBULATION ALLOWS YOU TO COMFORT OTHERS

II Corinthians 1:3-4

Tribulation means grievous affliction, distress, anguish, trouble, burdened, persecution, and suffering. The Bible teaches that the saints of God are going to suffer for the cause of Christ. "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye

are in heaviness through manifold temptations." (I Peter 1:6) "My, brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." (James 1:2) "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22b) "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (II Tim. 3:12)

Some may ask why do the saints have to have tribulation? Four basic reasons:

First, tribulation conforms us to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). Therefore, Romans 8:28 says, "all things work together for good," and this includes tribulation and suffering for the cause of Christ. It may not be good at the time, but it works together for good, and conforms us to the image of Christ.

Second, we learn to obey the Lord through suffering. Heb. 5:8 says, "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." If Jesus being the Son of God learned obedience through suffering, how much more do we need to learn to obey. Suffering teaches us to obey.

Third, we experience God when we suffer. Paul cried in Phil. 3:10, "That I might know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering being made conformable unto His death." Know means to experience. Paul knew that if he was to experience God and His power, he must also be a partaker of the sufferings of Christ. This is not referring to Christ's sufferings on the cross for our sin, but the daily persecutions He bore as He walked upon this earth. When we suffer for the cause of Christ, we experience Him because He shows up as the God of all comfort and comforts us in all our tribulation. (II Cor. 1:3-4) Comfort means to encourage and is kin to the word for "comforter" which means "one along side to aid". This refers to the Holy Spirit. So, when we are in tribulation, the Holy Spirit is along side of us to encourage us and this gives us strength to keep on keeping on.

The **fourth** reason we must have tribulation is so that we can be able to comfort and encourage others who are in trouble. II Cor. 1:3-4 states, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." We cannot lead others where we have not been ourselves. Therefore, we cannot really comfort others unless we ourselves have experienced the comfort that only God gives as He brought us through a similar circumstance. For example, If someone's child has died, you can walk up to the casket and say, "You have my sympathy, I'm sorry," but if you have not buried a child, you can't really bring comfort to that parent. But if you had buried a child, you could walk up to that parent and say, "I understand. I've been there. Let me tell you how God brought me through it." Then that parent receives comfort as the God of comfort pulls them up in His arms and encourages and strengthens them because they know that you do understand.

I'm convinced that God allows us to go through some things in our life for the purpose of one day being able to put our arms around someone else and say, "God is faithful. He keeps His promises and will not fail you. I'm your friend, and I'm going to stay with you through this. I love you. I understand." That is what that person needs instead of having friends like Job had, who had it all figured out, yet they were wrong and were not of any comfort to Job. God is God and you can't figure Him out. He operates the way He wants to.

The Lord told Peter he was about to enter tribulation (Satan's sifter) in Luke 22:31-32, but He also told him to strengthen the brethren when (not if) he came through the sifter. I thank my Lord for all the times of trials and trouble that I went through in my life. It

wasn't good at the time, but it worked for good; because now I can say to those in turmoil over their soul's condition, whatever state they may be in, "I understand, I am your friend, and I will stick with you and pray for you, and when the clouds settle, we'll stand and rejoice together in His victory."

Folks, I write this for you who are going through some things right now that you may not understand. All things work together for good. God is in control. He never makes a mistake. I just want to tell you, you're my friend and if I can ever be of help, please feel free to write or call (502) 527-3864. I can tell you how God brought me through and that He will bring you through, too. To Him be glory forever and ever. AMEN!

THE PERSUADER - June-July, 1989

ANOTHER GOSPEL

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:6-9

Paul was amazed that the churches of Galatia had been removed from the Lord unto another gospel. But he proceeds to say in verse 7 that there is not another gospel. In other words, there is only one gospel, and Paul said in Romans 1:16 that, "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first and also to the Greek." He defined this gospel in I Cor. 15:3-4 as the one he delivered unto the church at Corinth. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

In Galatians 1:8-9, Paul makes a couple of hard statements concerning any man or angel (messenger) preaching any other gospel than what he preached or the saints at Galatia received. "Let him be accursed." Accursed means to be condemned to the lake of fire, or separated from Christ forever. He makes this statement under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. In other words, God said, "let any man or messenger who would pervert (change, corrupt, or turn about) the gospel of Christ, be accursed." That individual deserves hell because he is leading others astray, thereby making them "twofold more the child of hell." (Mat. 23:15)

We are living in a day when many are preaching another gospel. We will deal with only four:

1. **CULTS** - We will define a cult, for the benefit of this paper, as a religious group who leave Jesus out of their teaching. When He is left out, their message is not the gospel or "good news" because there is no salvation when you leave Him out. Acts 4:12 speaks about Jesus, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." I'll not spend much space dealing with the cults because they are cursed, and Paul in essence said, "Let them go on to hell." By the way, some religions who use the name of Jesus could be identified as a cult

since Webster's define a cult as, "devoted attachment to, or admiration for, a person, principle, etc."

2. **BAPTISMAL REGENERATION** - There is no such thing! By this term we refer to those who believe that Baptism is necessary for one to be saved. They teach that one's sins are washed away in the baptismal water. They quote part of a verse, many times, to prove their point, such as Acts 22:16 when Ananias spoke to Paul and said, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." This is all they quote but the rest of the verse says, "calling on the name of the Lord." One's sins are washed away when He calls on the name of the Lord (Rom. 10:13) and one can only do that by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12:3). The Holy Ghost, must work godly sorrow that works repentance, and produce faith in an individual before he can call on the name of the Lord and be saved by having his sins washed in the blood of Jesus, not baptismal waters. If any man or messenger preaches baptismal regeneration, God's word says, "let them be accursed."

3. **WORKS** - Works is human merit mingled with grace which is another gospel. Eph. 2:8-9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Titus 3:5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Salvation is Jesus, plus nothing and minus nothing, with no human merit involved. All religions, whatever the names, can be divided into two divisions: (1) Do Religion and (2) Done Salvation. A "done salvation" means that Jesus did it all for me and when I receive Him and His finished work by faith, then I'm saved, it's done. A "do religion" is when one has to add human merit to grace to save him, keep him, or perfect him. When one does that, they are preaching another gospel and God's word says, "let them be accursed."

4. **WORD ONLY** - By this I am referring to those who preach their words right, but their practice does not match what the Word teaches. 1 Thess. 1:5 says, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." The Holy Ghost must empower the Word so as to produce godly sorrow and conviction. 11 Cor. 3:6 says, "...the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." One can have the right words but short-circuit the work of the Holy Spirit in practice, thereby causing many to think they are saved when, in reality, they are still lost and have no real assurance.

The Pharisees had the word but didn't have Jesus and eternal life. In John 5:39-40 Jesus said, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." John 1:4 says, "In Him was life." 1 John 5:12 says, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." If you don't have the Son, you don't have life. For years I had the revelation of the Son (word only), but I didn't have Him, the reality of Him. There is a difference. The difference between life and death.

We preachers need to preach the gospel of Christ which is the revelation of Him and then leave it to the Holy Ghost to produce the reality in the individual's heart. Paul said in 1 Cor. 3:6-7, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." We can only plant and water, but God must give the increase. When we practice anything different, we really are preaching another gospel and God's word said "let him be accursed."

The sad thing about it is that those who receive "word only" (another gospel) are also cursed, headed to a devil's hell, and their blood will be upon the hands of those who preach

another gospel. I'm disturbed at the fact that we as Baptists, in a large percentage, have been "removed from Him that called us into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another."

Brethren, let's get back to preaching and practicing the gospel of Christ that is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe, so others will not have to be accursed.

THE PERSUADER - August-Sept., 1989

SOVEREIGN GRACE

Hated by the Modern Religionist

Copied from the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1891, p. 49.

If anything is hated bitterly, it is the out-and-out gospel of the grace of God, especially if that hateful word "sovereignty" is mentioned with it. Dare to say "He will have mercy, and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion," (Rom. 9: 15), and furious critics will revile you without stint. The modern religionist not only hates the doctrine of sovereign grace, but he raves and rages at the mention of it. He would sooner hear you blaspheme than preach election by the Father, atonement by the Son, or regeneration by the Spirit. If you want to see a man worked up till the Satanic is clearly uppermost, let some of the new divines hear you preach a free-grace sermon. A gospel which is after men will be welcomed by men; but it needs a divine operation upon the heart and mind to make a man willing to receive into his inmost soul this distasteful gospel of the grace of God.

My dear brethren, do not try to make it tasteful to carnal minds. Hide not the offense of the cross, lest you make it of none effect. The angles and corners of the gospel are its strength: to pare them off is to deprive it of power. Toning down is not the increase of strength, but the death of it. Why, even among the sects, you must have noticed that their distinguishing points are the horns of their power; and when these are practically omitted, the set if effete (no longer able to produce). Learn, then, that if you take Christ out of Christianity, Christianity is dead. If you remove grace out of the gospel, the gospel is gone. If the people do not like the doctrine of grace, give them all the more of it. Whenever its enemies rail at a certain kind of gun, a wise military power will provide more as such artillery. A great general, going in before his king, stumbled over his own sword. "I see," said the king, "your sword is in the way." The warrior answered, "Your majesty's enemies have often felt the same." That our gospel offends the King's enemies is no regret to us.

Postscript To The Previous Article

We can not deny the truth of the previous article. Yet I am amazed at how many want to label you in certain schools of thought because you use certain words. "Sovereign" is a good word and simply means "chief, supreme, above all others" and that exactly describes God.

Even though God is sovereign that does not do away with man's responsibility and right to choose. God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1: 4); this choice was based upon the foreknowledge of God (I Peter 1:2). God foreknows the exercise of faith which brings salvation (II Thess. 2: 13), therefore He chooses to salvation.

This doctrine does not relieve us of the Great commission which He gave His church (Mat. 28:18-20). What this doctrine does do is cause God to get all glory concerning salvation and that is what stirs men up; the fact that self can not get any glory.

All we can do is water and plant but God gives the increase (I Cor. 3:6-9). May we stick with the Bible and not follow tradition of men that tries to short-circuit the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation by not letting the Sovereign Grace of God operate.

THE PERSUADER - April-May, 1990

MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Deuteronomy 30:19.

God made man and put inside him a "will", which gives him a right to choose. He can choose either death or life but he must choose.

There are some that teach that God chose some to live with Him in heaven and at the same time He also chose some to die and go to hell. The problem with this teaching is, it is just not so. There is a doctrine of predestination in the Bible which cannot be denied. The ones that God predestinated are those who are "in Christ". They are predestinated to "be conformed to the image of His Son." (Rom. 8:29) Predestination has nothing to do with a lost person.

There is also a doctrine of election in the Bible, but God never elects some to die and go to hell. He elects or chooses according to His foreknowledge. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: ..." (I Peter 1:2)

Since God has all knowledge (omniscient), then He can and did elect or choose before the foundation of the world. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

(Eph. 1:4) Note this verse says "in Him" meaning He foreknew who would be saved (in Him). Therefore, God chose him, wrote his name in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world, predestinating him to be conformed to the image of His Son and works all things together to accomplish this purpose. "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8) "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. 8:29) "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom.8:28)

II Thess. 2:13 reveals that God chooses "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth". This does not do away with the choice that man must make; but lets us know that salvation is of the Lord. Rom. 10:13 says: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;" but I Cor. 12:3b says that, "no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost." Luke 13:3 says one must repent or perish but one cannot repent until repentance is worked by godly sorrow. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." (II Cor. 7:10) Godly sorrow is the work of reproof of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11) which is called by most, "Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit Conviction."

Acts 16: 31 says for one to be saved, they must "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"; but one cannot believe until faith has been produced by the Holy Spirit through the word, (Rom. 10: 17) which is why Acts 16: 32 says that Paul "spoke unto him the word of the Lord." John 3: 27 says, "...A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven."

The Lord has to do the work in salvation, but man has to make the right choice. He has to choose light, about which John 1: 9 says, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Every man in the world has light within him that there is a God (Rom. 1: 19), and he also has light in creation that there is a Godhead (Rom. 1: 20); therefore, he is without excuse. Man must choose to respond to that light or truth if he ever expects to have life. If he chooses right, God will send a man of God across his path with the word of God to give him more light. Again, he must make the right choice and choose light which will allow the Holy Spirit to begin a work of reproof in that individual.

While the Holy Spirit is reproving him of sin, righteousness, and judgment, there will be many more times that he must choose light so that he can be brought to the "end of himself" and be saved. Salvation is easy, but being brought to the end of yourself is the hard part; and it involves making the right choices, many times.

In view of all that has been said in this article, we must conclude that salvation is of the Lord; but God made a man, not a robot, and placed inside him a "will." Therefore, he must exercise the right to choose. Choose light and live, but choose darkness and die a second death in hell. Choose light and the Holy Spirit will finish His work in you and God will say, "I chose him because I knew he would choose light and come to a place to believe on my Son." God will also say, "I predestined him to become like my Son and share in His inheritance one day in glory." (Eph. 1: 11) All of this will only take place if you make the right choice.

Moses made the right choice by choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11: 24-26), and God met him at the burning bush in Exo. 3: 1-14. Ruth chose to go with Naomi and her God (Ruth 1: 16-17), and met Boaz, a kinsman redeemer and got listed in the genealogy of Jesus in Mat. 1: 5. Esau chose wrong by choosing one morsel of meat over his birthright and found no place of repentance. (Heb. 12: 16-17)

It pays to make the right choice.

THE PERSUADER - August-Sept, 1990

WHEN AND WHERE DID ABRAHAM GET SAVED?

This is a question that is not hard to answer if we will simply look in the Bible, God's Word. Paul said in Romans 4: 3, "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." This type of righteousness is required for one to go to heaven. "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Mat. 5: 20)

Paul stated this same basic verse in Gal. 3: 6 and James quoted it in James 2: 23.

Abraham got saved when he believed God's promise. "And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." (Rom. 4: 21-22) Paul answered the Philippian jailer's question of, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" by saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 16:31) This is what Abraham did, "believe God" and he got saved. This answers the question, "When?"

The other question is, "Where did he get saved?" There must be a time and place when one is saved. You may not know the minute, day, or hour, but the time and place will be a very vivid reality in your life. If it is not, then you are not saved. Genesis 15:6 is the scripture that Paul and James quoted concerning Abraham. So to find out the "Where?", we simply need to find out where Genesis 15:6 occurred.

That is easy to do because Gen. 15:1 says, "After these things." After what things? After God appeared unto him in Mesopotamia and said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from they kindred, and go into the land which I shall shew thee (shew thee as you go)." (Acts 7:2-3) After he had dwelt in Haran for a number of years (unable to establish the exact number of years; may have been from 5 to 32 years). After God spoke to him at Haran when he was 75 years of age in Gen. 12:1-3. After he had entered Canaan and God had spoke to him again. (Gen. 12:5-7) After he had built an altar and worshipped. (Gen. 12:8, 13:4) After he had gone to Egypt due to famine in Canaan. (Gen. 12:10-20) After he had separated from Lot. (Gen. 13:5-13) After God spoke to him the fourth time (recorded) in Gen. 13:14-18. After he had defeated Chedorlaomer and his league of kings with 318 trained servants. (Gen. 14:1-16) After he paid tithes to Melchizedek. (Gen. 14:17-24)

Gen. 15:1 then says, "After these things," God spoke to Abram, for his name had not been changed to Abraham yet. At this time and place, approximately nine years after Abram entered Canaan when he was 84 years old, he believed God and got saved. (Gen. 15:1-6) You see, the Bible tells us when and where Abraham got saved.

This goes to show you how many times we fail to simply take God's Word and let it speak to us. For years I thought he got saved before he left Mesopotamia, because tradition leads us to believe that due to what Heb. 11:8 says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." This raises another question. If Abraham got saved nine years after being in Canaan (we just proved he did), what kind of faith did he have when he left Mesopotamia?

Heb. 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." The word "cometh" means along the path of understanding. The first time God spoke to Abram, he had "intellectual" faith, he believed "God is." (Heb. 11:6) Faith, whatever kind it may be will cause you to act; (James 2:20) therefore "intellectual" faith caused Abram to move out of Mesopotamia, "looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:10) This is "seeking" faith that brought him to an understanding of the promise of God so that he could believe unto salvation, by "saving" faith.

When God first spoke to Abram in Mesopotamia he did not understand the promise because he carried his father and Lot with him. God said, "Get thee out . . . from thy kindred." When in Haran after his father died, God spoke and said the same thing but Abram did not obey fully. He carried Lot, his kindred. Also when in Canaan, God spoke saying, "He would give his seed this land." (Gen. 12:7) Abram still did not understand the promise even though he had more information. In Gen. 13:15-16, God gave him more

information when He added, "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth." It is evident from Gen. 15:1-6 that Abram still did not understand, but as the Lord began to explain the promise to him, "saving" faith came and Abram "believed God" and he got saved.

"Saving" faith is necessary for one to get saved. "Intellectual" and "seeking" faith will allow you to believe the facts but salvation will not come until "saving" faith is exercised. This is evident in John 2:23-25. "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." Jesus did not commit Himself to these people because they believed only the facts, thus "intellectual" faith. If Jesus does not commit Himself to you, you are not saved.

Many today say, "all you have to do to be saved is believe." This is true if you believe from the heart with "saving" faith. This is what Abraham did nine years after he got in the land of Canaan. He had a time and place where the Lord saved him.

The question now is, "Do you have a time and place where the Lord gave you understanding of His promise and you believed unto salvation with "saving" faith?" If not you had better seek Him with all your heart so that you can be saved and then you will have a time and place where the Lord puts righteousness on your account.

I thank the Lord that the Bible answers our questions if we will rightly divide the Word and listen to the Holy Spirit instead of following tradition.

THE PERSUADER - Feb.-March, 1992

OLD PATHS

"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." Jeremiah 6:16

We are living in a day when modern technology has come up with "new and better ways" to keep up with the times. This is true in the religious world as well as the business world. Sometimes these new ways may be better, but sometimes they are not.

Jeremiah challenged Judah to find the old paths and walk "therein." They were also promised rest for their souls if they would do so. Judah did not choose the old paths but "new and better ways" according to their thinking and they ended up in captivity instead of rest.

This Old Testament scripture applies to us spiritually. We are living in a day when churches have found "new and better ways" to get the work of God done. Books are written by the hundreds that have a new angle or twist to get God's work done. But the question is, "Is God's work really being done?" God's word says, "ask for the old paths."

What are the "old paths"? Our first impression is that the "old paths" are the places our fathers and grandfather walked. This may be true in some instances, but the "old paths" go beyond their days. The word "paths" of the O.T. is the same as "the way" of the New Testament. In John 14:6, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The word "old" means time past, eternity, perpetual, or always. In Jer. 6:16 the word "old" goes back even further than the beginning of the world. In Jer. 18:15 "old paths" are called "ancient paths." In Dan. 7:9 Jesus is called the "Ancient of days."

We see the path Jesus took as it was decided in the council halls of God in eternity past

that He would leave His father's side and enter this world through a virgin's womb. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:14a, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Gal. 4:4, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." He lived a sinless life and died on the cross for our sins. I Peter 2:22-24, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." He was resurrected and carried His own blood and sprinkled it on the mercy seat in heaven for our atonement, to satisfy a Holy God. Heb. 10:12, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." This is the "old path."

Our text says "paths", a plural word. What are the "old paths?" "Old paths" refers to wherever and however God works in your life to bring you to Himself to be saved and then to fulfill your purpose by directing others in the old paths so that they, too, will be saved. John 1:4, "In him was life; . . ." I John 5:12, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

What do we need to do concerning the old paths? First **find** them. Jer. 6:16 says, "see and ask." To find the "old paths" we need to go back to history. I'm not talking about secular history, because all we learn from secular history is that we don't learn from history. I'm talking about **His Story**, the Word of God. Job 8:8, "For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers." Deut. 32:7, "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee." Find the paths that the patriarchs traveled before you, speaking of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Then we need to **search**. This involves more than just seeing, looking or consulting. Acts 17:11 says that the Bereans "searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Search means to inquire, examine and involves a sifting process to get at the truth by investigation, as of a judge. Before one searches, God has to work in that person's life.

Next we need to **consider** the path we are examining whether it be good or evil, right or wrong. Pro. 16:25, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Mat. 7:13-14 warns us to, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

After we find the "old paths" we need to **stand** in them. Gal. 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Eph. 6:13, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Then we need to **walk** in them. This means to practice what you have found to be true. James 1:22, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Gal. 5:16, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

If you find the "old paths," stand in them, and walk therein, you have the Lord's promise of rest, not only now, but throughout all eternity, because the word rest speaks of a place of rest in context. Thank the Lord there is rest if we walk in the "old paths" because they lead to Christ. John 14:1-3, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would

have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Wherever He is there is peace and joy and rest and quietness and assurance forever.

May we find the old paths, stand in them and then walk in them. There is no better way than God's way which is the "old paths."

THE PERSUADER - April-May, 1992

THE LORD DOES THE OPENING

Luke 24:13-35

In this message, I want to look at four things that the Lord opened for these two disciples. Even though these two disciples were saved, the truth of this message can apply to the lost. No one lost or saved can receive any thing unless the Lord opens it up to them. John 3:27, "John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven."

1. Opened the Scripture (vs 25-27)

The Lord expounded to these disciples things in the Old Testament (Moses and all the prophets) concerning Himself. The Old Testament is saturated with truth concerning the Lord Jesus. Jesus reminded the Pharisees that they missed Him in the Old Testament and in so doing they missed eternal life. John 5:39-40, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

It is the Spirit's job to open the scripture to man because the natural man can not understand it without His help. I Cor. 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Cor. 2:9-10, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." I Thess. 1:5, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." The Spirit of God uses human instrumentality to do this. Rom. 10:13-15, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Acts 8:30-31, 35, "And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

Contrary to what many believe, the Spirit of God opens the scripture to the lost that

they might be saved. Psalm 25:8, "Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way." John 6:44-45, 37, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." These disciples even confessed in verse 32 that Jesus opened the scriptures to them.

2. Opened their eyes (vs 30-31).

Satan, who is the god of this world, tries to blind the lost to keep them from being saved. II Cor. 4:3-4, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." He also blinds the saints by tradition and deception to keep them from growing in grace and that is the reason Paul prayed for the saint's eyes to be opened (enlightened) in Eph. 1:18, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," Sin also blinds. Isa. 59:2, 9-10, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men." The Lord must open one's eyes (spiritually) if they ever see anything. He opened these two disciples eyes in Luke 24:30-31.

3. Opened their hearts (vs 32).

Verse 32 states "their heart burned within" indicating a work of the Lord within. Every lost man has a closed (blinded) heart. Eph. 4:18, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Many say to the lost sinner, "Just open your heart and let Jesus come in." No man can open his heart, only the Lord can do that. Acts 16:14 gives proof that the Lord opened Lydia's heart: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Even though it is true the sinner must be willing for the Lord to come in, only the Lord can open one's heart so that he may be saved.

In fact, the Lord does not want to live in your dirty heart anyway. He wants to give you a new one and only He can do that. Ezk. 36:26, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." Say it however you want, but the final conclusion is that "Salvation is of the Lord!"

4. Opened their mouths (vs 33-35).

You could not have kept these two quiet about their encounter with the Lord. Every one who has been saved has their mouth opened to tell others what the Lord has done for them (as the Spirit leads). They will testify thus fulfilling the great commission. Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the

uttermost part of the earth." They will rejoice because their names are written in heaven. Luke 10: 20, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." They will sing, not only in the heart, but songs will come out of their mouth. Psalm 40: 1-3, "I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD."

If you have been saved or ever get saved, you will admit, the Lord does the opening. The writer of the song entitled "Open My Eyes, That I May See" knew the truth of this message as he penned:

Open my eyes, that I may see,
Glimpses of truth Thou hath for me;
Open my ears, that I may hear,
Voices of truth Thou sendest clear;
Open my mouth, and let me bear,
Gladly the warm truth everywhere.
Open my heart, and let me prepare,
Love with Thy children thus to share.

Our prayer ought to be: "Lord, open the Scriptures to me; open my eyes that I might see clearly; open my heart to receive You and all that You have for me; and open my mouth that I may tell others what You have done for me."

May we get hold of this truth: "The Lord does the opening!!

THE PERSUADER – June-July, 1992

SALVATION

The word salvation appears 119 times in the Old Testament and 45 times in the New Testament. Salvation means deliverance and can be applied to a physical or spiritual deliverance. Some people who have been delivered or saved from some physical harm claim that as their experience of spiritual salvation. For example: I once asked a man when he was saved and he replied, "I was in a plane on a bombing mission in World War II. I knew I might not make it, and I asked the Lord to bring me through alive and He did." This is not spiritual salvation but the goodness of God working in that man's life to bring him to repentance that he might experience spiritual salvation. (Romans 2: 4, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?")

When I begin to deal with specifics of salvation, the first thing some say is, "Bro. Paschall believes in progressive salvation." Let me set the record straight. Salvation is a quickening; therefore, salvation is point action and not progressive. One second, an individual is lost and the next second, he can be saved. Salvation is not progressive, but the work of the Holy Ghost in the life of a sinner before he is saved is a progression. The Holy Ghost must reprove (Holy Ghost conviction) man of sin, righteousness, and judgment before he can be saved. (John 16: 8-11, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me;

righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.") This is the process of Godly Sorrow that works repentance, which is necessary before man can be saved. (II Cor. 7:10, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." Luke 13:3, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.") Faith has to be produced by the Word of God in the heart of the believer so that he might believe unto salvation. (Rom. 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.")

The time involved varies with each person. Some may have all the necessary ingredients worked in one service, while others may take time due to their upbringing, circumstances, and emotional make up. If someone can not get things settled with the Lord in one service, does that mean I should push him aside and rebuke him because he did not get saved? No!! That person needs someone to love him, pray for him, and stay with him until the Lord brings him to the end of himself so that he might repent and believe and be saved. Those who stay with such an individual are sometimes labeled as one who believes salvation is progressive. No! No! When salvation occurs it is so quick you have to speak of it as past tense. Saved! Saved!

Salvation is a general word for three specific words: justification, sanctification, and glorification.

Justification means an individual is delivered from the penalty of sin; therefore, he stands in a just position before a Holy God. This occurs when an man's spirit is quickened or made alive in Christ. (Eph. 2:1, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.")

Sanctification is the walk of progression of the child of God toward perfection that will be gained at the first resurrection. This involves the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer conforming him to the image of the Lord. (Rom. 8:28-29, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.") Therefore, sanctification deals with a believer's soul being delivered from the power of sin day by day. (James 1:21, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.")

Glorification is future for all saints. This will occur when the Lord comes back in the rapture and changes the saint's old vile body into a glorified body like unto Jesus. (I Thess. 4:16-17, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." I Cor. 15:51-53, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." I John 3:2, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.") Therefore, glorification means we will be delivered from the presence of sin.

At the point of the quickening not only is the believer justified, but he is guaranteed to be sanctified by the Lord and also to be glorified. This is so sure, that Romans 8:30 speaks of all who are justified as already being glorified. (Rom. 8:30, "Moreover whom he

did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.")

Salvation is of the Lord! For no man can be justified without the Holy Ghost's finished work in a sinner's heart. In the same manner, no man can conform himself into the Lord's image. It is the Holy Spirit's work in the believer's life. It is also for certain no man can change his vile mortal body except the Lord. But all three specifics of salvation are guaranteed at the moment (the instant) you are born from above, quickened, made alive in Christ Jesus.

Has there ever been a time and a place where your spirit was quickened (made alive)? This did not happen over a period of time, but at a point in time and at a place. If you have this experience, you will for certain be sanctified and glorified. But, if you have not experienced this or have never been saved (justified), your future destiny is the lake of fire.

Paul said in II Cor. 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" I challenge you to compare your experience to the Word of God and if you find it does not match up, then junk it and let the Lord do a work in your heart, bringing you to salvation which occurs at a point, in an instant.

THE PERSUADER - August-Sept., 1992

CONFUSION

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."
I Corinthians 14:33

Confusion, as defined by Webster's Dictionary, means "to put in disorder". In other words, it means to rearrange from the original order that was given by its designer. For example, man was created "in order" in the garden of Eden by God, who is the God of order. Man became in a state of disorder when he sinned. Thus confusion had its beginning in mankind.

The Bible says in Gen. 1:2 that the earth was without form and void. "Without form" is one word in the Hebrew and means "out of order or confusion". The rest of Genesis chapter one goes on to describe how the God of order goes about placing His creation back in order. If you could have been standing on the edge of the earth in Gen. 1:2, you could not have seen the confusion or the state of disorder of the earth because "darkness was upon the face of the deep". But in Gen. 1:3 when God spoke light into existence, you could have seen the confusion. The light did not bring the confusion, but just revealed the confusion that was already there.

The same is true in every man. He is born out of order (confusion) due to sin inherited from his father, Adam. Even though man is out of order, he does not recognize it until light, the truth of God's word, penetrates his heart and shines upon his confusion and reveals it to him for the first time. The light did not produce the confusion but just revealed what was already there in his darkness.

Our text verse reveals clearly that God is not the author of confusion. If He is not the author, then who is? The devil is. When he tempted Eve and she yielded, sin entered and man became "out of order", in a state of confusion. When the Lord saves someone He

puts them back in order and gives them peace which is the opposite of confusion. (Rom. 5:1: Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.)

The Bible has much to say about the child of God. He knows his shepherd. (John 10:27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. John 10:5: And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.) He is sealed with the Holy Spirit who is the originator of the Bible. (Eph. 1:13-14: In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.) He will not be deceived by the miracles and wonders performed by the Antichrist. (Mat. 24:24: For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.) Note: "If it were possible."

We are living in a day where confusion is rampant in our world and even in our churches. This is due to the multitudes who have made professions of faith without ever having the God of order restore order to their confused hearts. Therefore, they have been deceived into thinking that their "profession of faith" is salvation. Then when a man of God, who is a "light bearer", comes along and preaches something that disturbs them, they become confused and say the preacher is preaching a new doctrine. As a result, they blame the preacher for causing confusion. No! The preacher didn't cause confusion but simply was the instrument that God used to turn the light on by using the Word of God and thus, the confusion was revealed that was already in their heart.

Some say confusion follows that kind of a preacher: therefore, they label him of the devil because the devil is the author of confusion. Have you ever examined the ministry of Jesus and Paul? Everywhere they went they stirred up commotions, tumults, and disturbances. The word confusion also means disturbance and is translated "commotions" in Luke 21:9: "But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by." and "tumults" in II Cor. 6:5: "In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings." Those agitated by the light (truth) that they bore claimed that they preached some "new doctrine". By the way, those that were agitated the most were religious!

God is not the author of confusion. The devil is. Therefore, when confusion comes, do what Paul said in II Cor. 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" Many times it is a whole lot easier to blame someone for your confusion instead of checking it out with God's Word. If you don't have what the Bible says salvation is, you are going to be bothered every time you get exposed to light (truth). The sad part is that many don't want to be bothered anymore and they leave the light and go elsewhere and hang on to their profession. Paul warned Timothy of such action in II Tim. 4:3-4: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." This reaction will cause many to end up in hell. Mat 7:21-23 says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

I beg you to get honest with yourself. Get honest with light (truth). Get honest with God and let Him substitute peace for that confusion you now have. You will never be sorry you did.

THE PERSUADER - Oct.-Nov., 1992

CONSIDER THE LATTER END

"For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Deuteronomy 32:28-29

The Lord stated in these verses a desire of His heart, that Israel would consider the latter end. "Consider" means to separate mentally, to discern, or to understand. Isaiah 1:3 makes a sad statement, "My people doth not consider". Jeremiah 30:24 states that in the latter days they would consider but then it would be too late. The time to consider is now before it is too late. But as we look at the Bible we see many who failed to consider the latter end.

In Genesis 25, Esau failed to consider the value of his birthright when he came home from a hunting trip famished. He considered only his stomach as he smelled Jacob's cooking and sold his birthright for one morsel of meat. (Heb. 12:16)

Samson failed to consider the latter end as he fulfilled his fleshly desires on harlots. When he laid his head in Delilah's lap and revealed the secret of his strength, he didn't think about his eyes being put out and having to grind in the prison house while the Philistines made sport of him. He didn't foresee the kind of death he would die when he pushed down the pillars of the temple of the idol god, Dagon.

King Ahab didn't consider that he would die the death he died when he allowed his wife Jezebel to have Naboth killed so he could possess his vineyard.

Hezekiah did not consider the latter end when he showed the son of the king of Babylon all that was in his house, in his treasures, his armor, and all in his dominion without asking God's will in the matter. Then when he was told what would happen to his descendants, look at the attitude he took in Isaiah 39:6-8. "Behold the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days." He did not care about his descendants but just wanted "peace and truth in my days".

Many in the Bible did not consider but not all. Abraham left the good conditions of Ur of the Chaldees to live in a goat hair tent. "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:10) Moses left the palace of Pharaoh, "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." (Heb. 11:25-26) Paul counted his pedigree in the Jewish heritage "as dung that he might be saved". (Phil. 3:4-8) These men considered the latter end.

What was the difference between those who considered and those who did not? Those who did not consider were blind to spiritual things. What blinds a person? Satan and sin. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (II Cor. 4:3-4) The god of this world is Satan.

Sin comes in many forms. Hezekiah was lifted up with pride after the Lord added fifteen years to his life and as a result he became more concerned about himself than his children or God. He was blinded by pride!

Samson's sin was "pleasure seeking". Luke 8:14 states, "the pleasures of this life choke out the word so that it brings no fruit to perfection."

Another sin which blinds is failure to grow in the faith. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (II Peter 1:5-9) Blinded to the extent one can not take the long look and consider the latter end.

This truth not only applies to Israel and men in the OT times but it applies to America and men today. Man says, "Money answereth all things." (Eccl. 10:19) But God says, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (I Tim. 6:10) Yet money is what dictates what we do. Think about it. Mothers go to work and leave their children with someone else to baby sit so they can make money to have more luxuries in life. They fail to consider the latter end and as a result, their children grow up with many emotional problems due to their missing out on their mother's closeness and love. Also, their children do not learn how to love their offspring and the situation gets worse with each generation, all because mother did not consider the later end.

Parents send their children off to a government school which teaches evolution and premarital sex. Our government school (not public schools because the public doesn't have much to say about what they do or teach) system is corrupt and a result of a conspiracy to control the minds of a generation so communism can take over America. Communism is not dead! I'm talking about the system of government schools being corrupt. This does not mean that all the teachers involved are corrupt. Thank God for good teachers but the system is corrupt and cannot teach children how to live and see life from God's point of view. Oh, they may teach them how to make a living but not how to live. You may ask, "What is the difference?" If one learns how to live, they will have character, know about the things of God, have a home secured in heaven where they will live forever, and they will be able to make a living as they pass through this world. It is sad to say, but most parents do not consider the latter end. They spend more time training their children how to brush their teeth than they do teaching them the things of God. When their teeth have decayed and fallen out, they will still have a soul that will spend an eternity in heaven or hell.

When a job offer comes for transfer, most people consider the money and do not consider whether they have a church to attend or what their children will have to encounter in the new location. Money! Money! Money! The devil has really got us blinded.

We just had an election for the President of the United States. Did you notice what

was the main issue discussed? Economy. Money! What about the issue of abortion, which is murder and against God's Word? What about homosexuality which is not a lifestyle but sin? What about family values? What about prayer in schools? What about God? None of these things were an issue to the majority of Americans. They just wanted our economy to be better so they can have it easier. Money! They did not consider the latter end. They did not consider what chance their children would have to live a God honoring life or whether they would be able to raise their children in a free America? No, they did not consider the latter end. Instead they cast their vote for a man that immediately said he would lift the ban on homosexuals, give more freedom to women to choose to have an abortion, and appoint liberal judges to the Supreme Court. This is just a list of a few things mentioned. These things leave God out of the picture. Yet many will get mad when they read this because they do not consider the latter end. Sounds like Hezekiah in Isa. 39:8, "There shall be peace and truth in my days," not considering what will happen to their children.

The children of Israel did not consider the latter end at Kadesh-Barnea when they did not obey God and enter Canaan. As a result all that were twenty years old and up, died. They lost what they could have had but got what they ask. But Joshua and Caleb, a remnant, got to go in later but suffered for 38 years as a result of the nation's choice.

Thank God there is a remnant (I want to be a part of it) that will consider the latter end and be willing to pay a price that our children may have a chance to serve God in freedom. But that remnant will suffer because of the choice the majority has made. America can not go on killing babies and putting their approval on homosexual lifestyle without the judgment of God upon her.

I believe God is looking at America like He did at Israel in Deut. 32:29, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Will you consider the latter end today as you make choices and decisions or will you consider after it is too late?

"O that America would consider their latter end!"

THE PERSUADER - Dec. 1992-Jan. 1993

COMING TO THE END OF SELF

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:24-26

Self has been said to be the part of man that 1) wants it's own way, 2) does not want to be criticized, 3) wants to be praised, and 4) has an appetite. The more self has it's own way, the more it wants it. The less self is criticized, the less it wants. The more self is praised, the more it wants. One can see from that definition that self wants to reign as lord of one's life. Therefore, for one to be saved, they must come to the end of self.

"Coming to the end of self" is not a phrase used in the Bible but a principle taught. This is what Jesus referred to in Mat. 16:24 when He said, "If any man will come after me,

let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." "Deny" means to forget one's self or to lose sight of one's self and one's own interest. To do that one must die to self. Paul said it this way in Gal. 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

"I am crucified" is one word in the Greek with the tense being perfect, which means that there was a completed act of crucifixion of the old man in past time having present finished results. Paul also said of himself in Romans 6:6, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." The words "is crucified with" are one word in the Greek with the tense being aorist, which means point action. Paul was crucified with Christ when he got saved. At the point when salvation occurred "Saul" was crucified and "Paul" was made alive, a new creature in Christ.

Crucifixion requires an executioner, who is the Holy Ghost. One can kill himself many ways but he can not crucify himself, that is the work of the Holy Ghost in Godly sorrow as He reproves (convicts and convinces) one of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 16:8-11) That is why "salvation is of the Lord." It is His work to bring man to the end of himself so that he can be saved.

It is clear in Mat. 16:24-26 that Jesus is speaking about salvation when He ask two questions in verse 26, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The word "deny" in verse 24 is in the aorist tense which means point action. When the Holy Ghost begins to work in a sinner's life, He brings (draws; John 6:44) him to a point where crucifixion takes place, which is at the end of self. This principle is a must in one's life if he is to be saved. As long as self is alive that person will not want the Lord to reign over his life.

One of the best Bible examples of this principle is Jacob. Jacob's name means "supplanter" which means to take the place of, especially through scheming. That was the characteristic of Jacob's life as he took the birthright and blessing from Esau by scheming, as a result he fled from Esau in fear of his life. We see him as he had an encounter with God in Gen. 28 still trying to make a deal. Gen. 28:20-22 states, "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Note the "if" in verse 20 and the "then" in verse 21. Self was still very much alive in Jacob.

Jacob didn't get saved in Genesis 28 because one does not get saved by making deals with God, but by taking Jesus as Lord. That Jacob did not do this here is evident from his own statement in verse 21, "then shall the Lord be my God." For the next 20 years his life still followed the same pattern of scheming as he dealt with Laban. As he heads back to Bethel, knowing that he would have to face Esau, he devises his own plan to soften Esau's heart. Concerned that his plan may not get the job done he prays in Gen. 32:9-12. This is the first time recorded that Jacob prayed to God. When self gets backed into a corner it usually likes to have a bit of "extra insurance" by asking God to help out.

Jacob then got alone at the brook Peniel where he wrestled with a man, whom he later referred to as God, until the breaking of day. Jacob was trying to get loose from God, trying to get out from under conviction. This would compare to Paul's "kicking against the pricks" in Acts 9:5.

Gen. 32:25 reveals that when God saw He could not prevail against Jacob, He touched the hallow of his thigh, the strength of his legs. Jacob now was helpless and he could not outrun Esau because he did not have two good legs any longer. At this point Jacob grabbed hold of God and then God said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." (Gen. 32:26) Jacob replied, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

This was the point where Jacob came to the end of self and God became his Lord. He got saved and became a new creature. His name was changed to Israel which means "a prince of God." His life begin to show he was different because he put away strange gods (Gen. 35:2) and built an altar for the first time (recorded) in his life.

All this resulted because God brought him to the end of self. Self got off the throne of his life and the Lord go on. That's what happens when one gets saved.

Have you ever had a place where you came to the end of self and Jesus became Lord? If you do not then you had better examine yourself! (II Cor. 13:5) You may not have called this experience by the same name as I, but the principle had to occur. This principle of "coming to the end of self" must have occurred in one's life if they possess real salvation.

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Does A Lost Person Seek God?

This question can only be answered if we go to the Bible to find the answer. Psa. 14:2 says, "The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God." Romans 3:11 states, "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." Many people base their answer to the question, "Does a lost person seek God?" on these verses alone. Therefore, they conclude a lost person does not seek God. Paul wrote in II Tim. 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." We must rightly divide the Word if we are to get a correct answer to our question; therefore, we must determine the state or condition of the one being referred to in Psa. 14:2 and Rom. 3:11. To do so we must start in the beginning.

When Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden, he was commanded not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Lord said, "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:17) The death the Lord was referring to was not physical death because Adam lived 930 years after he ate of the tree. The death the Lord was referring to was spiritual death. Adam died spiritually the day he ate of the tree just like God said.

Adam had been made in the image of God. (Gen. 2:26) Since God was a trinity so was man. Man has a spirit, soul, and body. When Adam died spiritually he ceased being in the image of God and passed to all of his descendants a fallen nature due to corrupted blood. Thus, all mankind is born with a dead spirit.

Man has world-consciousness through his body by the five senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. Man has a soul through which he has self-consciousness. The spirit of man is what makes man capable of God-consciousness. Since man is born dead spiritually he has no God-consciousness; therefore, he can not and will not seek God in this condition.

This is the condition referred to in Rom. 5:6 as being "without strength." This word is from a root word from which we get our word "anesthesia." "Anesthesia" is defined in the dictionary as a loss of senses by drugs or diseases, so when a man is under "anesthesia" he

has no world-consciousness. He cannot hear, see, taste, smell, or feel. He has lost his ability to be conscious of the world around him.

In like manner, a person who is dead spiritually is "without strength", is under the "anesthesia" of sin, and has no consciousness of God. He has no faith God-ward, no real prayer God-ward, no real worship, no reverence of God, and no hope. Therefore, we must conclude that a man in this condition does not seek God.

But Jesus said in Luke 13: 24 that, "many will seek to enter the strait gate, and shall not be able." Jesus, Himself said that there are some lost men who seek God. If Jesus said it, I believe it is true. Again we must rightly divide the Word, because there are no contradictions in God's Word. We must find out to whom He was referring.

The word "seek" is used many times in the Bible and is thought by most to be applied to the saints. It is true that saints need to seek Him and His wisdom, and fullness. But it is also true the Bible refers to sinners (lost) seeking God. For instance, Deut. 4: 29 says, "But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." A saved man has already "found" the Lord. Isa. 55: 6 states, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." Our Lord stated in Mat. 6: 33 for man to seek, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." A saved man need not seek the kingdom of God because he already is in the kingdom of God.

From these instances in the Bible we must conclude that before a man will ever be saved he must seek God. I know this goes against tradition because I've had preachers say to me, "God doesn't show a lost man anything." That raises another question. How will a lost man ever be saved unless God reveals to him he is lost and he begins to seek the Lord? Some say man don't seek, the Lord does the seeking. I agree the Lord seeks lost man, in fact that is why He came. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19: 10) This makes salvation of the Lord. He initiates it, He produces it, and He consummates it.

Let's reconcile all these scriptures. Man is born in sin, dead spiritually. (Eph. 2: 1) He has no consciousness toward God (without strength, Rom. 5: 6) therefore, he cannot and will not seek God in this condition. But God, who is rich in mercy and grace gives that individual "light" at some point in his life. (John 1: 9) This may be through his conscience or through creation. (Rom. 1: 19-20) When that individual recognizes the God of creation or recognizes that "God is" (Heb. 11: 6) he begins to seek something (really, someone) to fill the emptiness and void on the inside.

He may turn to drugs, sex, works, or religion to get fulfillment, but when he finds out they won't satisfy and he really gets serious toward God, the Lord will send the seed (Word of God) and a saint across his path. The devil knows the value of that seed; therefore, he tries to steal it to keep it from producing faith that he might be saved. (Luke 8: 12)

The Holy Spirit uses the Word as preached by the saint to reprove (convict and convince) of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 16: 8-11) The Psalmist said, "Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way." (Psa. 25: 8) The Holy Spirit imparts understanding to sinners as they seek the Lord. As they seek they must strive (Luke 13: 24) to overcome the obstacles the devil places in their path or else they will turn back to the broad way that leads to destruction.

Salvation is the Lord's work and it is at a point, an instant when man repents and believes. But getting to that point involves a work of the Holy Spirit and man seeking the Lord.

"Does a lost man seek God?" We conclude from the Bible that a man who has been

touched by God seeks the Lord. But he does not seek until the Lord touches him. When one is saved, he still gives all glory to the Lord, even for his seeking the Lord!

"Does a lost man seek God?" He **must** if he is ever to be saved!

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